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## OCWEEKLY.COM/SLIDESHOWS

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## up front

### The County

**06 | MOXLEY CONFIDENTIAL |** Why is OC's new sheriff trying to bury a trove of government records?
By R. Scott Moxley
**07 | A CLOCKWORK ORANGE |** Singer sings the blues
By Matt Coker
**07 | HEY, YOU! |** New twerkers on the block.
By Anonymous

### Cover Story

**06 | FEATURE |** Breathing life into OC's accordion culture is no easy task. By Nate Jackson

## in back

### Calendar

**13 | EVENTS |** Things to do while getting squeazed

### Food

**16 | REVIEW |** Il Palco in Buena Park is an Italian restaurant with a Korean accent, but you'd never know it if you weren't looking
By Edwin Goei
**16 | WHAT THE ALE |** A change in rankings By Greg Nagel
**17 | LONG BEACH LUNCH |** Spend your cheat day at the Kroft.
By Erin DeWitt
**20 | EAT & DRINK THIS NOW |** Hapa J's in San Clemente snappily serves Painkillers and poke
By Greg Nagel

### Film

**22 | REVIEW |** *Ash Is Purest White* follows a love story through changing times By Aimee Murillo
**23 | SPECIAL SCREENINGS |** Compiled by Matt Coker

### Culture

**25 | THEATER |** South Coast Repertory's production of *Photograph 51* explores how scientist Rosalind Franklin was exiled to history's footnotes
By Joel Bears
**25 | ARTS OVERLOAD |** Compiled by Aimee Murillo

### Music

**26 | ESSAY |** Classic Chicano film *Boulevard Nights* cruises to its 40th anniversary.
By Frank John Tristan
**27 | REVIEW |** New Rad Bull Music documentary *LA Skate + Music* is a loud love letter to the SoCal scene
By Josh Chesler
**26 | CONCERT GUIDE |** Compiled by Nate Jackson

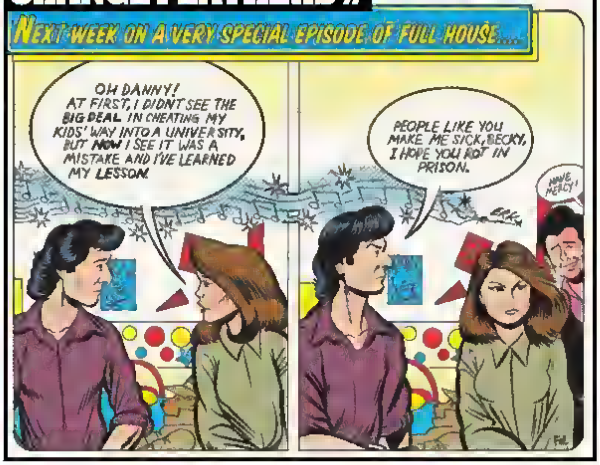
## also

**28 | SAVAGE LOVE |** By Dan Savage
**31 | TORE OF THE WEER |** Sherbinskis By Jefferson VanBillhard
**34 | LOST IN OC |** Rock in peace, Dick Dale and Greg Topper
By Jim Washburn

## on the cover

Photo and design by Michael Ziobrowski

## ORANGE FEATHERS »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"FISA warrants. Reading a lot about those concerning the 2 1/2 yr, Russian collision hoax. Regardless of what one thinks of Trump, [what] Obama Hillary FBI Justice Dept. & media (99%) have done to an elected president is worse than an assassination, I believe. All of their covers have been blown."

*— Norm Ehren, commenting on Nick Schou's "OC Mosque Informant Scandal Leads to Landmark Civil Liberties Ruling" (March 15)*

**We respond:** Yeah, the whole Russian collision thing is definitely a hoax. Wait, did the collision involve a meteor or Trump?

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# The Other Email Scandal

## Why is Orange County's new sheriff trying to cover up a trove of government records?

It wasn't surprising when word leaked last week that the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) quietly planned to erase emails. Such a move at an aboveboard agency might be worth a yawn. But freshman Sheriff Don Barnes' decision to destroy hundreds of thousands, if not millions of government records is alarming because of the timing and OCSD's sordid history.

During the jailhouse-informant scandal, for example, deputies employed sleazy bureaucratic tactics disobeying court orders for the production of documents. They claimed under oath no knowledge of records systems they used on a daily basis for years. Revelations of the systems later prompted them to hide or shred files rather than share with judges content that, we eventually learned, proved OCSD cheating.

**moxley CONFIDENTIAL**

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

Sheriff Sandra Hutchens, Barnes' shifty predecessor and mentor, insisted her deputies innocently thought they could ignore judicial commands. But the problem wasn't naiveté; it was contempt. To create shameless plausible deniability for failing to surrender demanded records, they even relabeled file systems to something only a clairvoyant with spectacular powers could have named in defense-attorney subpoenas.

That nationally embarrassing saga, plus two recent developments could explain Barnes' controversial planned email dump. California's new Senate Bill 1421 requires law-enforcement agencies to release police-officer-corruption records that had been kept hidden from public view for decades. Accustomed to special secrecy protections for their members, the state's cop-union bosses flew into a tizzy and have strategized how to thwart the law. OCSD sources say deputy wrongdoing was often memorialized in emails because agency officials never thought those records would be seen by outsiders.

The second development pertains to an OCSD scandal that emerged in August after Hutchens spent two months hoping the mess would disappear or a cover story could be concocted. Using a privatized jailhouse-telephone system, deputies for at least three years trampled the U.S. Constitution by secretly listening to attorney-client calls with pretrial inmates. That ill-gotten intelligence allowed police and prosecutors insight into defense strategies and made defendants unwitting witnesses against themselves, a situation our Founding Fathers detested.

BOB AUL

Naturally, OCSD officials deny any wrongdoing, but they have been less than forthcoming about how many calls were surveilled. That brought us to a March 15 hearing inside Superior Court Judge Gregg L. Prickett's Santa Ana courtroom. A team of public defenders have been waiting for months for Prickett's special masters to notify victims of the phone scheme. But not satisfied the full extent of the scandal is yet known, they requested an evidentiary hearing at which deputies and officials with the private phone contractor, Global Tel*Link (GTL), could explain murky, inconsistent accounts of their activities under oath.

"We have to make sure everyone's rights are protected in this county," Deputy Public Defender Sara Ross told Prickett. "We have to ensure justice is done."

But the judge, a former prosecutor, balked. "I'm denying the evidentiary hearing without prejudice," he stated. "I may [order it]. We're just not there yet."

Perhaps more urgently, Ross and the other present public defenders joined in alarm with colleague Scott Sanders, who discovered OCSD's email destruction plan. According to an internal memo dated March 12 from the agency's Support Services unit, all email files—including those sent, received and saved as drafts—that are two years and one day old will be automatically deleted on a rolling basis. Deputies and staff would have to be trusted to take affirmative actions to separate each email that is subject to pending legal holds and public records act requests.

For the devious-minded, the new policy could, to use the old idiom, kill two birds with one stone: a massive amount of emails related to officer corruption as well as attorney-client call monitoring would disappear on April 1.

Sanders believes there's no coincidence in the timing of the department's internal announcement. It happened only six days after he formally requested OCSD records, including emails, related to the illegal phone surveillance. This public defender, who also uncovered the snitch scandal in 2014, says the new policy would erase emails for 27 of the 41 months when jailhouse calls to defense lawyers were recorded. He asked Prickett for a temporary restraining order blocking Barnes from erasing any emails until the scandals are over.

"The request for at least a temporary order prohibiting any and all deletions is necessary to protect due process," Sanders wrote in a brief. "The OCSD had more than three years to stop recording [attorney-client] calls—a period of time in which deputies were listening and never shared that fact with defendants or courts—while the defense has only had months to figure out what precisely occurred and whose communications should be studied in a quest for answers."

He noted that the same OCSD unit that ran illegal informant operations also executed the illegal call-monitoring scam and some of its members have been branded badged perjurers by judges.

"There is abundant reason for concern that members of this unit (and other members of the OCSD involved in any acts of related concealment), if left to their own decision-making powers and devices, would hide or destroy evidence," Sanders added.

He bolstered his argument by citing MuckRock.com, a nonprofit journalistic website that obtained and published some email exchanges between OCSD and GTL. The communications reveal glaring discrepancies in the agency's and corporation's public declarations. Sanders asserted they even suggest efforts of a cover-up to dampen public concern.

Deputy County Counsel Annie Loo, a former public-corruption reporter at the *Orange County Register*, came to the rescue of the deputies, arguing the public defenders had "maligned" them with "flat-out false" claims. "There is no evidence whatsoever of wrongdoing related to the emails," Loo said while strenuously opposing Sanders' request to temporarily suspend deletions of all agency emails.

But if Prickett was cordial with Ross, he was sassy with Sanders, lecturing him wrongly on at least two points. that he should have attached a personal declaration to his motion when he had and that his suspension request pertained only to the call surveillance-tied emails. Never mind, apparently, that on Page 7 of Sanders' motion, he'd written, "This Court should issue an immediate [temporary] order directing that employees of the OCSD not destroy any of its emails."

Wearing a smile of contempt, Prickett repeated his stance that Sanders' request had not been for all emails. The judge did, however, order the suspension limited to the call-monitoring issue "out of an abundance of caution." He also scheduled a March 29 hearing to revisit the controversy.

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

» MATT COKER

## Singer Sings the Blues

Starting March 12 and for days afterward, you half expected Donald Trump to retroactively implicate his son Barron in Operation Varsity Blues just so the president could get back to grabbing all the headlines.

March 12 is when William "Rick" Singer pleaded guilty in federal court in Boston to money laundering, racketeering, obstruction of justice and tax evasion. Facing up to 65 years in prison and a $1.25 million fine at sentencing on June 19, Singer is seeking leniency by admitting to having built phony athletic profiles and hiring decoys to take admissions tests for the academically challenged spawn of wealthy parents utilizing the service he operated out of his Newport Beach home, Edge College & Career Network (a.k.a. "The Key").

Someone else seeking leniency helped the government unravel the alleged admissions-fraud scheme. Marnie Tobin, a Los Angeles financial executive under investigation for a scam similar to the one depicted in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, admitted the Yale women's soccer coach sought a $450,000 bribe to get Tobin's daughter into his alma mater. Since-fired coach Rudy Meredith led the feds to Singer, who has been singing ever since.

As a cooperating witness, Singer secretly recorded calls with the likes of: *Full House*'s "Aunt Becky," Lori Loughlin, and her husband, Mossimo Giannulli, whose Mossimo clothing brand started on Balboa Island; Douglas Hodge, the former CEO of Newport Beach investment-management company PIMCO; I-Hin "Joey" Chen of Newport Beach, a shipping-industry executive; Robert Flaxman of Laguna Beach, the founder and CEO of a real-estate development firm; and Michelle Janavs of Newport Coast, a former executive of her family's food business,

MICHAEL ZIOBROWSKI

which popularized Hot Pockets (the UC Irvine School of Business and the Jewish Community Center of Orange County are named after her father, Paul Merage).

Those parents have been indicted on federal fraud charges along with dozens of others. Operation Varsity Blues led to: Hodge and Janavs resigning from a private Newport Beach school's board; a Rancho Santa Margarita mother and her Saddleback College student son joining a class-action lawsuit; and Chapman University cooperating with the feds because of ties with Singer's foundation and a wealthy indictee whose son got into the Orange institution.

It's the scandal that keeps on giving.

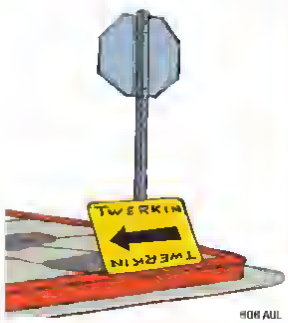
**MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM**

## HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

### Twerkers On the Block

You were the carful of young ladies who pulled up on my block the other day. You were blasting music and shouting at one another. My wife almost called the cops on you because when you all jumped out of the car, all of you pretty much screaming at once, it sounded as if you were about to start a fight. Instead, out came the cellphones, and the music got even louder, and then you filmed one another twerking for the next half an hour. Thanks for the show. Not sure why you chose my block, but here's hoping you started a tradition!

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# SQUEEZEBOX HEROES

## BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO OC'S ACCORDION CULTURE IS NO EASY TASK

BY NATE JACKSON

Jim Gilman is ready to rage.

Playing to a crowd chomping on schnitzel and gulping down lagers in the dining room of Old World during the weekend of Karneval (the German equivalent of Mardi Gras) on a recent weekend, Gilman, a.k.a. "The Squeezinator," is sporting lederhosen, long green socks and a traditional German hat. A gold-plated accordion strapped to his chest, the tall, grayhaired Yorba Linda resident conducts a two-hour set of German waltzes, polkas, pop covers, and a slightly boozy rendition of "Do-Re-Mi" from *The Sound of Music*.

"To be a real Oktoberfest song, I had to change the lyrics just a little bit," Gilman explains. "When I point to you, you're gonna say the magic word. You know what that is?"

The crowd responds in unison. "BEER!"

"Dough, the stuff that buys me ..."

"BEER!"

"Ray, the guy who sells me ..."

"BEER!"

"Me, the guy who drinks the ..."

"BEER!"

"So, I think I'll have a ..."

"BEER!"

You get the picture.

One family of German guests who drove from Carlsbad to hear the Squeezinator is singing along at the top of their lungs. Kids dragged into the restaurant with their parents suddenly stop to stare at Gilman when they hear the sound of the accordion, they look gobsmacked, probably hearing it for the first time.

Despite the stereotypes, there's a reason why Gilman calls the accordion his main squeeze. "People laugh, but I almost consider the accordion the perfect instrument. bass, chords, rhythm, melody, non-electric and portable," he says a few minutes before his regular weekend set. "The guitar comes close but not quite because you can't do bass, rhythm and melody all at the same time. Nowadays, if you want a guitar player or a drummer, you can find 'em any place, but if you want an accordion player, you gotta look pretty hard."

Gilman has made a career of being ready with his accordion whenever called upon—from his days at Knott's Berry Farm in the '70s, performing for $1.85 per hour, to playing at an odd wedding on a plane flying over LA, aboard cruise ships to Puerto Rico, a cameo on an Oktoberfest episode of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and everything in between. Several years ago, he even hosted an accordion festival at the Orange County Fairgrounds called the Big Squeeze, founded by Jill Lloyd in 2009, it went on until 2014.

Part of keeping the history of anything going is the will of people to keep it going. Nowhere is that truth more apparent than with the accordion. Outliving cool for the sake of tradition and the warmth it brings is what inspires players in OC to go above and beyond to preserve the sound of their ancestors. Many accordion players in OC are invested in seeing the instrument continue to survive, bringing the instrument into the 21st century through a variety of genres, from polka to punk. They have a special connection to it. For Gilman, being one of the few players in a small scene has its financial perks, as well.

"If you play the accordion, know a few polkas and got a pair of lederhosen, man, October is your month," he says gleefully. "It's like Christmas, baby! You're workin'!"

There are two types of instruments in this world: the kind that define coolness and the kind that outlive it. The accordion, almost by definition, is a survivor. We've all heard the jokes, the enduring ridicule of the squeezebox from the rock & roll generation that made a God out of a guitar (now replaced by the laptop). But looking deeper, past its unjustly maligned existence, through a toothy jungle of reeds, bellows (the "accordion" part that expands and contracts), levers, buttons and keys, there's a miracle in every breath of its sound. It has the power to put you somewhere—usually at the center of a party.

Just as there are two types of instruments, there are two types of accordions. Diatonic accordions function and sound akin to a harmonica, the chords triggered by pressing an array of small buttons on the right-hand side. The push and pull of the bellows makes two different notes. Then there's piano-style accordions, with keyboard-style fingering on the right. Though they look similar, for most players, they're worlds (and countries) apart.

Accordions are sized according to the number of bass buttons on their left-hand side—12, 48, 72 and 120 being the most common configurations. Reeds in the accordion are tuned by scratching the metal, which decides if the note goes up, down or middle.

Inside Fred Mlakar's Irvine living room, a row of accordions are lined up on a coffee table. Each represents a different era of his family's accordion lineage. As a third-generation polka player, the old

instruments are a reminder of his Eastern European roots

Mlakar's family came to the U.S. as Slovenian immigrants after World War I, they were the cheap labor in the iron mines of northern Minnesota. They brought music from Europe, playing their accordions in bars and at church picnics and weddings. Both of Mlakar's parents belonged to Slovenian American clubs, and they immersed their sons in the culture. "Some people just wanna get past their ethnic roots and want nothing to do with them, some people embrace it and keep it going because it's meaningful to them," he says. "That was my family."

Kaiser Steel Mill, built during World War II, lured many European groups to Fontana including Italians, Czechs, Poles. Mlakar's family was no exception, and when they moved to the San Bernardino County city, they found a Slovenian American community with a hall where they had parties.

Mlakar's father ran a tavern that had musicians playing accordion while immigrants drank and danced to polkas and waltzes. "I either had to run away from town and get away from it, or just embrace it and go with it," Mlakar says of the music. While their friends were starting rock & roll garage bands, the Mlakar brothers had a polka garage band that would become known as Akrabolt! They recorded a few albums that were released on a Dutch label.

"It was fun," Mlakar says. "It was party music, and the rockers weren't making fun of us because we were getting more gigs than they were." Folks of their parents' generation hired them for wedding receptions and dances. They eventually expanded their repertoire to include rumba, cha-cha, swing and American country. "After a while, you get out of your ethnic community," he says. "You get to learn a lot and be versatile."

Mlakar touts the greatness of squeezebox pioneers such as Frank Yankovic, the Polka King (no relation to Weird Al). After WWII, this Slovenian performer hit it big with a cover of the Shelton Brothers' country song "Just Because."

"[The original] didn't go anywhere, so [Yankovic] picked it up and made a polka out of it, and it went straight to the top of the charts," Mlakar says. "It was on every jukebox in the country."

It's rare that accordions get passed down within families. But for Mlakar, performing at places such as Old World or the Claremont Folk Festival means embracing the older models—including the chromatic button accordion his grandfather played in the '30s. "When you show up with the vintage instruments, it's cool," he says. "People wanna talk about it. It generates a lot of interest in the craftsmanship, the sound. It's a conversation starter."

Unlike guitars, most accordions don't retain their value. But their cultural and stylistic value keeps Mlakar fixing up his family's relics, to the chagrin of his local accordion repairman, Jeff Iacono. "[Jeff's] very good at repairing old ones, so I come

COURTESY OF JIM GILMAN

COURTESY OF FRANK MLAKAR

to him with some of these old accordions, and he goes 'Why do you wanna fix up these old accordions? Why don't you just buy a new one?'" Mlakar says. "But I always say, 'Jeff, this is history! They don't make 'em like this anymore!'"

An accordion player himself, Iacono is a bit different than most of the musicians he knows in the scene. "The polka guys don't really understand me," he says.

Leaning over a sterile workbench in his garage, Iacono spends a recent rainy Wednesday morning performing triage on an old accordion. For the past decade, he has sold new accordions and run a repair shop, Maestro Accordions, from this garage. (His wife, Angelina, a seamstress, also works out of the garage, with her work area next to his.)

For today's repair job, all of the pieces of a reed block—through which air passes to give the reeds their sound—are laid out next to an office light and a magnifying glass. Judas Priest's "Hell Bent For Leather" rages quietly on the stereo in the background.

"This is a monster job today," Iacono says.

To build an accordion from scratch takes four to eight months and requires more than 1,000 parts comprising its frame and guts. "It really smokes guitar building," he says.

"The work and knowledge and expertise that goes into building an accordion is like a guitar times 10,000," Iacono continues. "It's a very complex animal."

He makes some small accordions from scratch himself, but sends the majority of his pieces to Italy.

In fact, some new accordions have just arrived from Italy, still sheathed in plastic—everything from vintage-style woodgrain wonders to freshly painted button boxes with flames painted on the grates. "Look at this guy," Iacono says, unveiling a wood-grain beauty with a lacquered finish and fresh ivory keys. "Just beautiful craftsmanship."

Iacono trained at the Borsini factory in Castelfidardo, Ancona, Italy, where all the world's best accordions are still made. (It was forced to close in 2014 after declaring bankruptcy.) Each individual piece of an accordion made in Castelfidardo is worked on by an expert in that part. Generations of Italians crafted keyboards and front bodies (known as the "cassotto"), fashioned and refined reed blocks. "Everything's gotta be airtight in an accordion," Iacono says.

Iacono's unlikely obsession began after a lifetime immersed in rock & roll. In the '80s, he moved from Chicago to LA, chasing hair-metal stardom as the singer for a band called Gun Shy. They opened for bands such as Poison, Warrant and Guns N' Roses during the heyday of the Sunset Strip. "I would hand Guns N' Roses our flier, and they would hand us theirs—that's how long ago it was," Iacono says.

Eventually, he started playing jazz. At the height of his career, he recorded with Frank Sinatra's last band. During a session with them, his arranger suggested adding an accordion to a song he wrote. Iacono was captivated by the sound made by the musician they hired, Frank Marocco, a world-renowned accordion player for legends such as Dean Martin and Pavarotti. "[His playing] made me realize I love the accordion," Iacono says. "I never heard anyone play like that."

A jazz accordion player who fancies the beauty and precision on new accordions, it's hard for him to convince players that older accordions are typically not as big of a commodity. "Most players are playing a '50-year-old accordion," he says. In the '40s and '50s, many American households were visited by door-to-door accordion salesmen who charmed and often scammed their way into selling the instrument to parents with young children. This led to many old squeezeboxes sitting in attics and basements across the country. "They have no idea how good they could sound and how nice it is to play a new instrument." Because there are so many parts inside

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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# SQUEEZEBOX HEROES

» FROM PAGE 9

YOUNG

COURTESY OF VINNIE AND THE HOOLIGANS

an accordian, its monetary value is kind of like that of an old car—it plummets "You'll never see an old accordion on my chest," Iacono says

Over the years, Iacono has been in charge of fashioning top-of-the-line accordions, custom jobs with a multitude of features, hybrid electronic parts sprayed and detailed with sports-car paint, etc. He even created an accordion exhibit for NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants), whose show descends on the Anaheim Convention Center every year

He shows off photos of a button box for one of his clients, it's painted with flames and resembles something that might have a V8 engine purring inside "Our painter is friends with the guys at Lamborghini," Iacono says, "and they put Lamborghini paint on an accordion!"

Rowdy, fast, and loud. This is the kind of accordion playing that makes a band like Vinnie and the Hooligans tick. With his tattooed arms pushing and pulling the bellows of his vintage squeezebox, Scotty Young's style encapsulates the vibe of a raucous, smokey Irish pub where anything goes after midnight. In high school, the South County musician found the instrument a perfect vessel to transmit his love of such bands as the Dubliners and the Pogues

Though he started his music career on guitar, learning the accordion wasn't as easy as he thought it would be Not only did Young have to find a teacher, but he also had to find an accordion and learn how it works. In San Diego, he discovered an old Italian man to whom he was referred by an accordion virtuoso he found by searching YouTube for local accordion players "This guy was at least 80 years old," he says. "He and his wife lived in this tiny historic home on the coast that doubled as his business." The home, according to Young, was completely set up for business. "All they did was repair and sell accordions," he recalls. "It was wall-to-wall accordions, guts of accordions everywhere—it looked like the workshop of a shoe cobbler from the 1800s."

Young bought his Hohner piano accordion off the guy for $800 Later, after joining Vinnie and the Hooligans, he had it appraised and discovered it was built in the '40s "I was walking around in the crowd, having beer spat on me in really rowdy environments, and here I am, playing this old accordion," he says.

Now the owner of three accordions, Young says that for his style, playing an old-sounding instrument is part of the charm The rich depth of its old bellows give it a vibe he says no new instrument can match. "If I could paint a picture with what I want to do with the accordion, it's not so much about getting better at playing it, but rather being in an atmo-

AYALA

sphere," he says. "Can I be a character in a pub smoking, drinking beer, being a little bit rowdy and sentimental, too, and playing music that reminds you of the past?"

IACONO

COURTESY OF JEFF IACONO

In the world of *norteno* music, the party is king. For decades, Mexican dance music popularized by giants such as Ramón Ayala has thrived on the energy, rhythm and sound of the accordion. In the '60s, diatonic accordions were getting tricked out with rhinestones and candy-colored paint jobs, with designs such as the Mexican flag imbued onto the bellows.

Luis Rodriguez, owner of Gulf Music Sales, a wholesale accordion distributor in Orange, has seen his share of flashy accordions over the decades, with some garnering well more than $10,000. "There's a terminology I have amongst my friends. *Payaso* is a clown; the clownier it is, the more they like it," Rodriguez says. "The more rhinestones, bells and whistles you can put on it, the better."

Selling a mix of brands of diatonic accordions to the Latin market—mostly Alacran and his in-house brand, SofiaMari, named after his daughter—is a business he fell into unintentionally. "I'm a musician, but to be honest with you, I play all this stuff," he says, pointing to percussion instruments.

Growing up, the Puerto Rican New Yorker was more into *cumbia* and salsa than *norteno*. As a salesman, he represented the company Latin Percussion and Sabian cymbals, but after moving to OC and getting requests from local vendors for accordions, he switched things up. He took a trip to China, where accordions are mass produced, and started distributing them back in the States.

Working with wholesale giant Musician's Friend, he supplies stock for big chains including Sam Ash, as well as mom-and-pops such as Constellation Musical Instruments in Santa Ana.

"Getting into accordions gave me something I could call my own," he says, leaning back in an office chair, with his headset perennially on as he fields sales calls and customer orders all day.

At 75, Rodriguez has no plans to retire. "I got a niche," he says.

As the number of brick-and-mortar music stores declines, finding new, top-shelf accordions is an increasingly harder task.

Many of Rodriguez's clients in the Mexican market looking for diatonic accordions come directly to him for squeezeboxes instead of buying from a chain store. "Hispanics like to buy from people they can talk to. A lot of times, they're not treated the same way if they go into a store and the guy can't understand what they're saying," Rodriguez says. "We sell a lot of products based on the fact we speak Spanish."

When Constellation opened in 2004, it had only a handful of guitars and a single accordion. Manager Carlos Cancino was just a kid when his mom bought the once-failing store from a friend who needed to get rid of it. Today, the humble location provides lessons in guitar and accordion to young players. Doting parents occasionally poke their heads in to hear their kids' progress playing the traditional folk songs.

As a Colombian teenager growing up in Santa Ana, Cancino picked up the accordion to learn styles such as *vallenato* and *cumbia*. "In Mexico, it's more *norteno*, in my country, it's *vallenato*, which is like *corridos*," he explains, referring to the traditional Mexican rural ballad. Over the years, he has seen the hard work of maintaining the store pay off in the support it has gotten from regulars who come in to purchase their kids' first instruments or to fix up old dilapidated ones.

"It's thanks to the community that we're able to even be here," he says. "We've had a lot of support from schools in the area—them sending their students here to buy their instruments and [take] music classes—and a lot of people in the community come here to learn."

As with any other musician, accordion players have to do it for the love—or no one else will.

"One of the bad things about the accordion is that it doesn't have any sustain," Iacono says. "A guitar chord could ring out for a minute, pianos ring out forever. With the accordion, the second you stop moving, it stops. It is hard to play, in the sense you have to keep moving to do it."

Once a month at the Phoenix Club in Anaheim, Mlakar assembles a group of accordion players to jam and trade folk songs from their respective traditions.

"It's very informal," he says. They take turns, and there's usually a lot of folk musicians. There are a few German guys, one of whom was a merchant marine and brings his button accordion; another guy is Latvian, a novice who was embarrassed to play in front of everyone in fear of making a mistake. "I told him, 'Get up there and make your mistakes—nobody gives a damn! Play your music,'" Mlakar says. "And he did, and he felt good about that. Good music comes from the heart."

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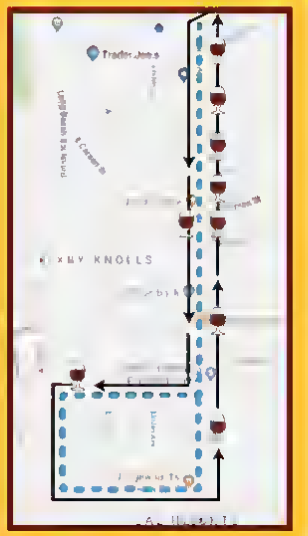


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COURTESY OF MUSCO CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## fri/03/22

[CONCERT]

### We're With The Band

#### A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of The Band

The set list for Dustbowl Revival and Hot Club of Cowtown's tribute to the Band, the iconic roots/rock super-group that also backed Bob Dylan, will be terrifically predictable. The young musicians will perform "The Weight" and "Up on Cripple Creek," among others from their catalog. The estimable Dustbowl Revival does their danceable Americana interpretation, while Hot Club of Cowtown delivers Western swing/jazz. Get a ticket to this 50th-anniversary homage and joyful revival, then "take a load off, Fanny. Take a load for free."

A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Band with Dustbowl Revival and Hot Club of Cowtown at Musco Center for the Arts, 1 University Dr., Orange, (844) 626-8726; muscocenter.org. 7:30 p.m. $25-$55 —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[FESTIVALS]

### Under the Sea

#### Noche de Estrellas

At the Aquarium of the Pacific's sea-inspired fiesta, Noche de Estrellas, you'll salsa-dance to the rock *en español* sounds of Sonsoles, a global ensemble of musicians from Spain, Mexico and Los Angeles. Danza Azteca will share a cultural Aztec dance in traditional outfits, and ECNO will take the stage for an energy-packed performance. This family-friendly event also offers scavenger hunts and ocean-conservation activities in both English and Spanish. And you'll be able to indulge in tasty Mexican cuisine and *cerveza* from various local vendors. While you're there, explore and interact with more than 11,000 aquatic creatures from all over the Pacific.

Noche de Estrellas at Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100, www.aquariumofthepacific.org. 6:30 p.m. $14.95; members and children younger than 3, free. —MORGAN EDWARDS

## sat/03/23

[FESTIVALS]

### Woman Power!

#### Woman's Day Festival

All festivals that want to recognize and honor women should take note: This one is inclusive, all ages, multiracial and bilingual. This powerful celebration will feed your soul and nourish your heart as your elders share ancient wisdom. Connect with women from all colors and backgrounds, while DJs spin, singers sing and poets speak. There will be activities for your children and art-based workshops on flowers, colors and medicinal herbs. Vendors, raffles and bands will be there to enliven and uplift this special day. Embrace and celebrate the woman you are and leave empowered—because that's what being a *mujer* is all about!

The Ninth Woman's Day Festival at Calle Cuatro Plaza, Fourth and French streets, Santa Ana, www.facebook.com/events/1295902433893823/. 1 p.m. Free. —LILA SHAKTI

[FOOD & DRINK]

### RAISE YOUR STEIN!

#### Bockbierfest

There are many ways in which various cultures celebrate the coming of spring. And over at the German cultural haven that is the Phoenix Club, the stated tradition is Bockbierfest! Bock beer is stronger than your average beer, with a higher original wort content and, of course, alcohol content. Today, Die Gemuthlichen Schuhplattler of Anaheim will tap the bock and begin filling steins with both bock beers and local craft brews while guests dine on traditional German food and enjoy the performances of Bavarian folk dancers and the Express Band. Remember to indulge responsibly!

Bockbierfest at the Phoenix Club, 1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim, (714) 563-4166, www.thephoenixclub.com. 6 p.m. $10. —SCOTT FEIN BLATT

# sun/03/24

[PETS]

## Mutts to You

### Bark Bash

The Heritage Museum in Santa Ana hosts the third-annual Bark Bash, and every person and dog of every age and breed is welcome to join in on the fun! This bash is a way to raise money and awareness for dogs in need of safe homes and necessities. Vendors include Doggissage, which will offer free canine massages to attending pups. Also on hand will be Earth and Agate Jewelry, Assisi Workout Wear, and Farm Fresh to You. Proceeds from the Bark Bash support Barks of Love, the Orange County nonprofit organization that takes in all dogs with the mission to foster future best friends.

Bark Bash 2019 at Heritage Museum of Orange County, 3101 W. Harvard St., Santa Ana, (714) 540-0404, barksoflove.org. Noon. $10, children 10 and younger, $5. —LAUREN GALVAN

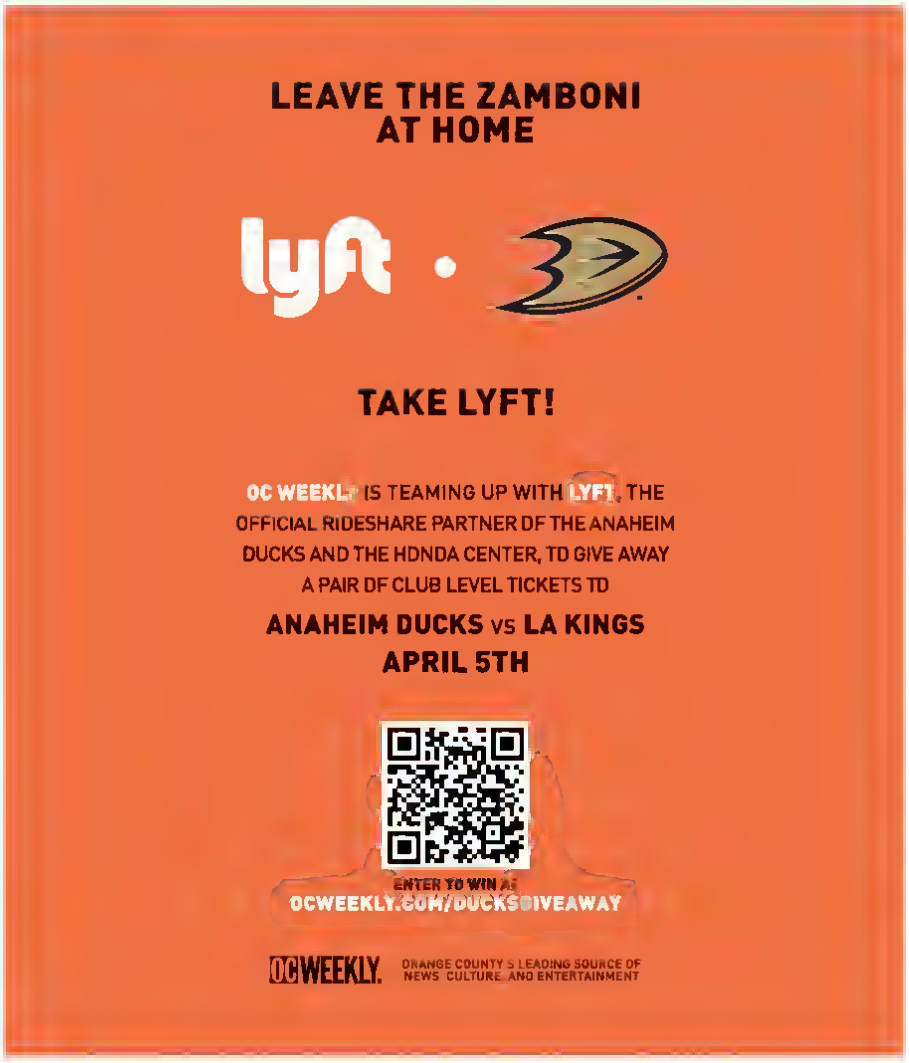
[FILM]

## Gold Dust Woman

### *Stevie Nicks: In Your Dreams*

This year, Fleetwood Mac icon Stevie Nicks will become the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice—first with her band in 1998, and now as a solo artist. And in celebration, the Art Theatre presents *In Your Dreams*, a 2013 documentary that follows the poetic songstress as she records her 2010 album of the same name. Produced by Eurythmics' Dave Stewart, cameras descend upon the studio that Nicks and Stewart set up in her home. Shifting dynamically between video formats, recording sessions and interviews, this portrait of the world's most beloved musical gypsy is a must-see for all Nicks fans.

*Stevie Nicks: In Your Dreams* at the Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435, arttheatrelongbeach.org. 11 a.m. $9-$12. —SR DAVIES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# mon/03/25

[TRIVIA]

## Love Ya, Will!

### Will Ferrell Trivia Night

If you have a fever, and all you need is more Will Ferrell, you're in luck. Head to Alex's Bar to show off your arsenal of trivia related to the Irvine native's career. Bob your head as if you're heading to the Roxbury or funnel a beer as if you're channeling Frank the Tank—no matter what your favorite Ferrell character is, there's likely going to be a question so obscure you're not even able to answer. So get your latte and piano-key necktie ready to out-duel your fellow Ferrell fans, or else they'll be singing "Dust In the Wind" for you instead of Blue.

Brain Party Trivia presents Will Ferrell Trivia Night at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. 8 p.m. $5 buy-in. 21+. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

# tue/03/26

[DANCE]

## Cut a Rug!

### Free Dance Lessons

Now, we're not saying you *need* dancing lessons—but just in case you ever felt self-conscious about your skills on the dance floor, drag those two left feet over to Segerstrom Center's Argyros Plaza and learn how to shake a tail feather! Weekly dance lessons are now a regular thing there, with a different style each month. For March, OC Salsa Dance's Cherry Salmon will be guiding students in salsa and bachata. With her and other expert instructors as your guides, there's no more shame on the dance floor in your future.

Free Dance Lessons at Argyros Plaza at Segerstrom Center, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 6:30 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

# wed/03/27

[ART]

## Print's Not Dead

### 'Gráfica América'

Just about any creative person will tell you that collaboration is key to developing as an artist. It not only provides the opportunity to bounce ideas off one another, but it also often forces artists out of their comfort zones to create things they might not have otherwise. The "Gráfica América" exhibition is a celebration of this collaborative spirit as it has appeared throughout the history of printmaking. Currently on display are a wide array of prints, ranging from historical publications to contemporary and experimental works by artists from the Americas including Fernando De Leon, Miguel Ledezma and Lorena Padral. Throughout the exhibit's run, various workshops will encourage attendees to embrace these collective values and integrate them into their own communities.

"Gráfica America" at the Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, (562) 437-1689; molaa.org 11 a.m. Through Sept. 1. $10
—STEVE DONOFRIO

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

## YOGA-NA LOVE THIS

### Sunset Yoga

The days are getting longer, and those of us with office jobs aren't leaving work in the dark anymore. (And didn't we vote to get rid of this already? When is that happening?) So we actually want to do stuff in the evening now, instead of hibernating in our apartments, and that includes things such as yoga class. This one in particular sounds extra spring/summery: Held at Lantern Bay County Park in Dana Point, the class starts at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, at the perfect time to catch the sunset over the Pacific. Also, it's a small donation to participate, a percentage of which is donated to Rancho La Hermosa Orphanage. SunsetYoga is good for the body and soul.

SunsetYogaat Lantern Bay County Park, 25111 Park Lantern, Dana Point; www.iheartyoga.org. 5:30 p.m. $8 donation. —ERIN DEWITT

# thu/03/28

[CONCERT]

## Taste the Rainbow

### Black Moth Super Rainbow

The reluctantly terrestrial/aspirationally celestial Black Moth Super Rainbow put out their first full-length since 2012 last year, teased in part with a single featuring a Mike Watt/Flea/Kira Roessler combo, and it's a close encounter of the fourth kind. (That's where they take you with them.) Like Boards of Canada or Broadcast—if they were into private new age and slow-mo '80s synth-pop—their *Panic Blooms* is lo-fi in a way that makes it feel as if it's been soaked to the point of dissolution in endless waves of FM static. You know vaporwave, yes, but after that comes vacuum-wave, which is what happens as you slip past the edge of atmosphere. That's Black Moth Super Rainbow, using technology to leave an entire planet behind. In 1971, Captain Beefheart said, "I'm not a rock star. I'm a soft person. I'm not a rock." "That's interesting …" replied the interviewer. "A soft star." And that's *Panic Blooms*, too. It's not a rock, but it still shines.

Black Moth Super Rainbow with High Tides at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. $20
—CHRIS ZIEGLER

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

## To Your Health

### Mikkeller Running Club

Born out of the Copenhagen-based Mikkeller Brewing, the international Mikkeller Running Club merges the fitness element with the way-less-scary prospect of a cold beer in your hands afterward. The main idea, however, is that you get out of the house, do something active, and bring along friends or make new ones—oh, yeah, and you get a free beer out of it, too! This Mid-Week Edition starts at Anaheim's Noble Ale Works, where you'll meet the OC chapter of the club, then jog or run a 5K loop around Angel Stadium. Afterward, you'll head back to Noble for a brewski. No matter what level of runner you are—expert, lazy, etc.—enjoy this nice physical-fitness break with new pals and a refreshing beer as reward.

Mikkeller Running Club's Mid-Week Edition starts at Noble Ale Works, 1621 S. Sinclair St., Ste. B, Anaheim, (714) 634-2739, www.noblealeworks.com. 7 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

# Seoul Napoli

## Il Palco in Buena Park is an Italian restaurant with a Korean accent, but you'd never know it if you weren't looking

BY EDWIN GOEI

When the server brought the bread to the table, I at first thought it was a giant pita. The puffy half-moon sat upright in a narrow wicker basket and was as large as a woman's purse. Next to the basket was a saucer of olive oil and balsamic vinegar with bits of garlic floating in it. But as strange as it looked, the most surprising thing about this warm-from-the-oven flatbread happened when I tore off a piece. It yielded to my thumb and forefinger with little force. It was as though I was tearing through tissue paper. And even though it had a hollow pocket as if it were a pita, it was unlike anything I'd ever tasted before. I barely needed to chew. The texture was unimaginably tender, as though it was made of down feathers and clouds rather than flour and water.

Whatever wizardry was involved in constructing this bread, someone knew the exact point at which to stop kneading. As any baker knows, gluten development is the culprit of toughness. Here, enough of it was allowed to attain some structural integrity but not at the expense of that melt-in-your-mouth consistency. The result is so addictive that when the server asked if I wanted another, I replied in the affirmative despite knowing it would fill me up before the rest of the meal arrived.

As you will when you dine at Il Palco. This Italian restaurant set atop the highest floor at the Source in Buena Park is very service-oriented—the kind of establishment where your water glass is a chalice and the servers offer to refill your soda before you think to ask. But even if you subtract the attentive waiters, Il Palco would still be the classiest restaurant in this M.C. Escher-eque mall. A jazz-piano soundtrack echoes in the white-marbled space. String lights dangle above the smaller of the two outdoor patios, and the larger one has a railing that separates you from a four-story drop.

After I ate the second piece of bread, using it to sop up every drop of that garlic-festooned dipping sauce, my potato-and-bacon pizza arrived. I found the unusual topping listed next to the Margherita and other Naples-style pies. But upon closer inspection, Il Palco has a few other pizzas that are not as unusual as they are Korean. The first one I noticed is the shrimp pizza. If you're familiar with the wildly popular Mr. Pizza chain in South Korea, you'd know that shrimp is as pervasive a topping there as pepperoni.

The potato-and-bacon pizza, as it turns out, was also Korean. When I ordered it, the waiter warned me that the same chile sauce that's in the shrimp pie made this one sweet.

THE TRUE ORIGINS OF PIZZA?

PHOTOS BY MORGAN EDWARDS

He didn't for a second mention that it's made for Korean palates or that the sweetness actually pairs well with the salty cheese, tart tomato and smoky bacon. He issued the warning, he told me, because other customers—who were presumably unaware they walked in to a Korean-owned Italian restaurant—have had a problem with it.

But the revelation I had as soon as I took my first bite wasn't with the toppings, which tasted exactly like cheesy scalloped potatoes; it was the crust. The pizza was made from the same supple dough as the bread I had earlier. The edges were cotton-soft, but it had a floppy middle, where the dough didn't stand a chance against the wetness of the toppings. As a result, I had to knife-and-fork it.

Aside from those pizzas, Il Palco would be indistinguishable from other upscale Italian restaurants of late. If I ordered only the Di Mare Pomodoro, I wouldn't have suspected it came from anything other than an Italian kitchen. The dish—consisting of fork-twirlable al-dente spaghetti surrounded by scallops, two sizes of shrimp, mussels, clams and calamari—was the kind of seafood pasta I'd expect from any red-sauce joint with a mustachioed-chef stereotype cooking in the back. The most I might've thought was that a Calabrian was responsible, since it was spicy enough to make my lips numb.

I also wouldn't have had a clue if I'd ordered just the rib-eye steak, which was seared to a crusty brown on all sides and served with its own pan sauce. I liked that the steak came with creamy mashed potatoes, sauteed Brussels sprouts, bacon cubes, cherry tomatoes and bright-green spears of broccolini. It's a complete meat-and-potatoes dish that wasn't particularly Italian, it was just good and satisfying.

But the best item of all was a deep-fried octopus, its skin oil-blistered while its meat remained delicately soft. The arm sat atop a bitter arugula salad with sliced tomatoes, oranges, fried Peewee potatoes, and a lemon-and-egg emulsion. Was it Italian? Korean? A hybrid? I didn't care. To me, like that bread, a great dish such as this transcends any and all nationalities.

**IL PALCO**

**6980 Beach Blvd., Ste. H-304, Buena Park, (714) 690-1430; www.il-palco.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Entrees, $16-$36. Full bar.**

## WHAT THE ALE

» GREG NAGEL

### A Change In Ranks

It's hard to look at the supermarket beer cooler and draw conclusions as to who is winning the craft-beer war. More than half of the brands available are owned by two companies: MillerCoors and ABInBev. Their obvious 18- and 30-packs are on one side of the rack, with their various poseur craft brands camouflaged neatly among various small and independent brewers on the other.

The Brewers Association just released its 2018 rankings based on sales volume, and many of the beers we enjoy at home saw some major changes. Normally, brands gain or lose one or two spots, but this past year included a couple of double-digit movers and shakers.

On the craft list, Modern Times Beer entered the top 50 by a modest 11 points. Its Leisuretowne, still under construction in Anaheim, will add various beer-tasting areas, as well as a vegan Mexican food café and a coffee bar. (Other Modern Times locations include Dankness Dojo in Los Angeles; the Lomaland Fermentorium and Flavordome in San Diego; the Far West Lounge in Encinitas; and the Belmont Fermentorium in Portland, Oregon.)

It was no surprise seeing Green Flash Brewing sunset off the list from No. 43 in 2017. That company's story of larger-scale, poly-state regional distribution where overexpansion, debt and a considerably slowing industry put a dent into operations.

San Diego's Karl Strauss, which has two locations in OC, made its way onto the big list for the first time at No. 50, which is shocking as the brewery only distributes to the state of California—or Karlfornia, as the staff like to say.

What's your favorite grocery-store brewery?

**LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM**

GREG NAGEL

ERIN DEWITT

# A Delicious Mess

## Spend your cheat day at the Kroft

**LONG BEACH LUNCH**
» ERIN DEWITT

The last time we spoke with the Kroft team was in 2014, not long after its flagship location opened inside the Anaheim Packing House. The Santa Ana-based duo of Stephen Le and Matthew Tong had ambitious plans to expand, with their second spot, in Tustin, set to open within a few months. Flash forward to now, and it's clear the Kroft guys made some changes to that plan. Namely, closing the Union Market Tustin locale to focus on a brand-new space in Long Beach.

The most recent addition to Long Beach Exchange's Hangar food hall, the Kroft celebrated its official grand opening last weekend, handing out free grub and restaurant swag to the first 100 customers in line. The menu here mirrors previous installments, with sandwiches, sides, drinks, dipping sauces and a section dedicated solely to poutine. "We fell in love with poutines when we traveled to Canada," Tong says, "and felt Southern California needed a place that specializes in poutines."

Among the new items are the tikka masala poutine, East Coast dip sandwich, Cubano sandwich and cheeseburger egg-rolls. Though I was excited to try them all, on the day I went, just prior to the grand opening, the kitchen was out of the East Coast dip. I was disheartened, as it promised a combination of braised pork, broccoli rabe, pork au jus, provolone and horseradish sauce, but I soldiered on.

The Cubano sandwich comes on a sweet brioche-type bun, stuffed with tender, shredded pork, marbled slices of ham, thick pickle rounds, a smear of mustard aioli (which was more mustard than aioli, thankfully), and melted, gooey Swiss cheese. Grab some napkins—from the residual-butter shine of the bun to the cheese and fillings sliding out the side, this sandwich is fairly messy business.

The tikka masala poutine, on the other hand, comes neatly contained in a paper box (though if you are handed a to-go bag, be careful, as that box is not closed inside, presumably to keep contents from oversteaming themselves). A spectacular Canadian drunk food, poutine traditionally consists of French fries topped with cheese curds and gravy, plus any number of additional toppings. Here, a heaping portion of fries is doused in a deeply rich, spicy tikka masala sauce and a quick drizzle of crema. Start digging, and you'll find hearty pieces of roasted chicken and marble-sized white cheese curds that render soft and sweet to the bite. It's huge and heavy—and if the Kroft were open past midnight, this poutine would for sure be a late-night top seller.

The rest of the menu features the same over-the-top cheat-day items that made the Kroft's concept so popular (and also nab our Readers' Choice award for Best Fries in 2018), including Flaming Hot Cheese Curds and the braised beef poutine, which features gravy, mushrooms and, of course, braised beef—"one of our favorites," according to Tong. The Loco Moco version finds the same massive mound of fries topped with meatloaf, brown gravy and fried onions, all crowned by a fried egg.

There's also a porchetta sandwich that comes with three kinds of pork: pork belly, brined pork loin and cracklings. And if you really need a vegetable, you can get a side of Brussels sprouts or jalapeño coleslaw for just a few dollars each.

"It's like a fast casual gastropub," Tong says. "The Kroft definitely adds some hearty comfort food to the Long Beach scene."

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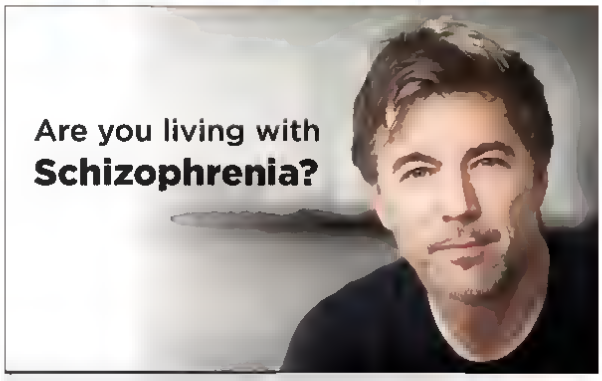


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PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

## Painkillers and Poke

### Hapa J's in San Clemente snappily serves them both

It's funny how recommendations for a restaurant can come by way of odd circumstances. Maybe it's a knowledgable bartender casually getting excited about deep-fried pickles at a place in Long Beach. Or a Middle Eastern Lyft driver laying out his top 10 list of spots in Anaheim's Little Arabia.

But for once, when I asked my wife where we should eat, expecting the typical "I don't know; you're the fricken food guy" answer, she said Hapa J's in her former hometown of San Clemente.

I didn't look at its website, consult Yelp or search Edwin Goei's vault on ocweekly.com. I wanted to be truly surprised, but during the 40-minute drive there, I couldn't help but silently wonder what kind of food Hapa J's even served. "Is it a Jamaican speakeasy weed den?" I asked myself.

But I didn't yet know the word *hapa* is Hawaiian and describes a mix, mainly a fusion of Asian and European DNA—which is fitting as my wife ate there recently with a pal who is half Japanese, half Polish.

From the parking lot we were greeted by the buzzing sound of surfboards being shaped, a seagull hovering overhead pooped on a Jeep Wrangler, then squawked three times and flew away. "Dude, we could totally be in Hawaii right now," I said, giggling as I kicked a rock through the lot and admired the thousands of surf stickers plastering every surface.

Once inside, we were met by a host so friendly it's as if we were seeing an old friend at a baby shower.

I start with a pint-sized Painkiller, made with Pusser's Rum, coconut cream and various juices, the drink is my go-to when trying a place for the first time because the recipe is trademarked and rarely deviated from.

As I spend 10 minutes debating what to order, a kid nearby entertains himself by squirting free edamame beans across the restaurant. I try the same, saying "Kobe!" as I shoot one in my mouth at arm's length on the first try.

Hapa's service is snappy, which is surprising considering how busy it is. It's a Sunday afternoon, and the main dining room is full of moms and dads, surfer bros, disby gal pals, and a chorus of babies. But the mounds of food drowns them all out, almost acting as a sound dampener.

From the portion sizes, it's apparent why so many families eat here: the shareses. The ahi salad I ordered is an exact 3,300-to-1 replica of the island of Lanai, complete with a volcanic dome of greens surrounded by an ocean of juicy tuna cubes erupting with fresh umami, crunchy bits, snappy peppers and sweet onions.

Hapa J's is perfect for locals, a respite from those San Diego trips when traffic is stopped for no reason, as a stop on the South County brewery/distillery tour, or after a long day at the beach with the fam.

"After a meal, it should be called Napa J's," I say, then konk out in the passenger seat while my wife drives us home.

**EAT & DRINK THIS NOW**
» GREG NAGEL

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# Can't Go Home Again

*Ash Is Purest White* portrays a love story through changing times

BY AIMEE MURILLO

There's something transcendent about actress Zhao Tao, whose performance in writer/director Jia Zhangke's *Ash Is Purest White* might one day be considered timeless. Tao's haunting gaze and meditative presence reminded me of Italian actress Giulietta Masina in some of her iconic roles for director Federico Fellini. With similar tenderness, as well as a hardened wisdom, Tao becomes *Ash*'s emotional anchor, onto which we tie our (dashed) hopes

In the film, Tao plays Qiao, a "jianghu" mob boss' girlfriend who goes through a series of journeys—of the literal and figurative kinds—after she shoots a firearm in the air to save her boyfriend, Guo Bin (Liao Fan), from being mercilessly decked by a rival gang. To protect Bin, she claims to police the firearm is hers, since owning illegal firearms is against the law, she serves five years in prison, while Bin only serves one. Once she's released, Qiao travels via boat to the Three Gorges, where she believes Bin to now be living Being unmarried lovers is an act of social rebellion, but there is no permanence in it, and Tao learns that Bin has moved on with a new girlfriend. While other folks would then walk away heartbroken and defeated, this moment instead kickstarts the second half of the film, with Qiao relying on her own resilience and street smarts to survive through the most heartbreaking of circumstances

There's plenty more drama happening in the periphery of this love story, and the mediums with which Zhangke captures these scenes add to the conceptual vision. The film begins in 2001, and Qiao, the daughter of a coal miner, sees firsthand how people of the rural city Datong in Shanxi are affected after economic upheaval slowly dissipates the coal industry. Protests are rampant throughout the region, and these scenes were shot on handheld DV cameras for a more guerrilla-style, documentary-like aesthetic

Zhangke (with the aid of French cinematographer Eric Gautier) uses different cameras to accentuate the visual differences between each time period, effectively altering the mood of the scenes. The scenes in Three Gorges, a rapidly booming area near the Yangtze River caught between old traditions and progress, were shot on film. And the last chapter of the movie, which takes place in 2018, was shot on HD video

The one constant is the view of the gorgeous landscapes to which Qiao and Bin return during various points in the film to ponder existentially about the social transformations they witness. Even the "jianghu" underground, as Bin notes grimly, is disappearing, and in its place are packs of violent, younger criminals. Even within their familiar underworld, these outcasts can't quite find refuge

Without a doubt, the main theme in *Ash* is the journey, both in terms of place and time, and it's within scenes of transit that we understand Qiao best. The camera remains transfixed on her as she travels by bus, train, boat and car, and Qiao's calm demeanor belies an inner genius. For instance, after learning of Bin's new life in the Three Gorges, she meanders aimlessly through the city, effectively homeless, as she processes Bin's betrayal. Rather than pity her, we're repeatedly surprised by her wiliness, as she (humorously) cons her way into random strangers' wallets to survive (Reserve your judgement, though, because these people definitely have it coming.)

Tao and Fan are an excellent pair of lead actors, and in their dramatic scenes together, Qiao reveals her vulnerable and emotional core. While most of the film focuses on Qiao, Zhangke never lets us forget this is the story of two people existing within the margins of society through a large time frame. As time moves on, both Qiao and Bin realize how fearful of changing times they really are.

*Ash Is Purest White* is interesting in that it feels both contemporary and classic, likewise, it is culturally specific but also otherworldly and universal. Zhangke fuses various elements to illustrate that a long journey through time does not shapeshift us into new people, but rather reveals us as we actually are.

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

# Notorious

BY MATT COKER

***Cruel Intentions.*** Annette (Reese Witherspoon) unwittingly becomes a pawn in a diabolical wager between Sebastian (Ryan Phillippe) and Kathryn (Sarah Michelle Gellar). *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Thurs. Wed., March 21-27. Visit website for show times and ticket prices.*

***The Love Witch.*** A modern-day witch (Samantha Robinson) uses magic spells to get men to fall in love with her. But her attempt to snare the man of her dreams leads her to the brink of insanity and murder. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 21, 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation.*** In Genndy Tartakovsky's 2018 animated comedy, Count Dracula (voiced by Adam Sandler) and company embark on a cruise for sea-loving monsters, unaware their boat is commandeered by monster hater Van Helsing (Jim Gaffigan) and his crew. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs. March 21, 6:30 p.m. Free.*

***The Reflecting Skin.*** A young man (Viggo Mortensen, in one of his first starring roles) returns home from military service in the Pacific and takes a liking to an English widow (Lindsay Duncan). But his younger brother (Jeremy Cooper) is convinced the lady has been stealing the souls of their neighbors...one by one. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 21, 9:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Book of Monsters.*** In Stewart Sparke's 2018 female-led, horror comedy, six kickass women fight off a horde of terrifying monsters at an 18th-birthday party. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 21, 10:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Climax.*** A celebration by a troupe of young dancers turns nightmarish when they realize the sangria they have been pounding is spiked with powerful LSD. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., March 21, 11:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Us.*** Jordan Peele keeps it creepy as a family's serenity turns chaotic when doppelgängers drop by. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Opens Fri., visit website for show times and ticket prices.*

***The Juniper Tree.*** In medieval Iceland, two sisters (Bryndis Petra Bragadottir and, in her first onscreen performance, Björk) flee for safety after their mother is burned to death for witchcraft. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 5:30 & 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 2:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m.; Sun., 5:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Leprechaun.*** In a summer-rental home, a tenant (John Sanderford) and his daughter (Jennifer Aniston) unwittingly open a crate containing a peeved leprechaun (Warwick Davis) out for blood. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Under the Skin.*** Scarlett Johansson is an alien sent to Earth to seduce men and drain them of their life. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri. Sat., 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Stevie Nicks. In Your Dreams.*** David A. Stewart and the title subject co-direct this 2013 documentary that opens with the Fleetwood Mac songstress writing and recording her first solo album in nearly a decade. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Fri., 11 p.m., Sat. Sun., 11 a.m. $9-$12.*

***The Room.*** In the bizarre 2003 indie thriller written, directed, produced by and starring Tommy Wiseau, he plays an amiable banker having a grand old time in a gorgeously shot San Francisco with his fiancee (Juliette Danielle)—until his conflicted best friend (Greg Sestero) joins in to form a love triangle. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sat., 11 p.m. $7-$10.*

***The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*** Live shadow-cast troupe Midnight Insanity performs. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $9-$12.*

***To Kill a Mockingbird.*** Turner Classic Movies and Fathom Events present Robert Mulligan's 1962 drama, based on Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck) defending a black man (Brock Peters) falsely accused of murdering a white woman in the Deep South is seen through the eyes of the attorney's daughter Scout (Mary Badham). *TCM Primetime* host Ben Mankiewicz delivers special commentary before and after the film. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 1 & 4 p.m., Wed., noon & 7 p.m. $10-$11.25.*

***Lost In Translation.*** A May-December friendship (and more?) develops between a faded movie star (Bill Murray) and a neglected young wife (Scarlett Johansson), who find they have nothing but each other after meeting in Tokyo. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Sun., 5 & 7:30 p.m., Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Black Dynamite.*** Badder than Shaft, Black Dynamite (Michael Jai White, who also co-wrote the screenplay) seeks justice after his brother is killed by The Man. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 2, 4, 6 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Made In Abyss: Journey's Dawn.*** Riko and her robot friend Reg set out on a harrowing trip into the Abyss, whose dark depths have swallowed up many who came before them. This event includes the screening dubbed in English from the original Japanese, plus never-before-seen footage, exclusive interviews with the anime's creators and a behind-the-scenes look at Kinema Citrus studio. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Mon., 7 p.m. $10.50-$12.50.*

***Bernie the Dolphin.*** Kirk Harris' 2018 family action-comedy is about a brother and sister (Logan Allen and Lola Sultan) trying to stop bad guys from destroying a St. Augustine, Florida, beach and its sea life, which includes the kids' new dolphin friend, Bernie. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Tues. 4 p.m. Free.*

***Diana Ross: Her Life, Love and Legacy.*** Fathom Events beams into theaters just one part of the "Diamond Diana Celebration," which marks the 75th birthday of Motown's legendary diva. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Tues & Thurs., March 28, 7 p.m. $13-$15.*

***Fruits Basket.*** A high-school student moves out after tragedy strikes her family and is eventually taken in by a mysterious clan. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Tues., 7:30 p.m. (dubbed in English). Wed., 7:30 p.m. (in Japanese with English subtitles). $20.*

***RBG.*** Betsy West and Julie Cohen's revelatory documentary on U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who at age 85 finds herself an unlikely pop-culture icon. *CSUF, Gordon Hall (formerly University Hall), Room 205, 800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, calendar.fullerton.edu/?eventId=344751573. Wed., 11:30 a.m. Free.*

***The Babadook.*** A widowed mother (Essie Davis), plagued by the violent death of her husband, does not believe her son (Noah Wiseman) when he rants about a monster in the house. Mom will learn. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., March 28, 2, 5:30, 8 & 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

***Sunset Blvd.*** Billy Wilder's 1950 skewering of Tinsel Town has a struggling young screenwriter (William Holden) finding the easy life in the mansion of faded silent film queen Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson). *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed., 7:30 p.m. $9.*

***Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2.*** James Gunn's 2017 sequel has the ragtag Marvel team traveling to the outer reaches of the cosmos to unravel a mystery involving the family tree of Peter Quill/Star Lord (Chris Pratt). *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., March 28, 1 p.m. Free.*

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# Double-crossed Helix

## South Coast Rep explores how Rosalind Franklin was exiled to history's footnotes

BY JOEL BEERS

Behind every man's great scientific discovery, there's a woman who got dicked. No, not *that* way. And maybe not *every* discovery. But it happened in one of the 20th century's most significant scientific finds, the double-helix structure of the DNA molecule. It made James Watson and Francis Crick household names for the *Jeopardy* set, but the pivotal contributions of fellow scientist Rosalind Franklin were exiled to historical footnotes, at best.

That's one of the takeaways from Anna Ziegler's 2008 play, *Photograph 51*, receiving a smart, well-tailored production at South Coast Repertory. Ziegler is too talented a playwright to reduce the fascinating backstory behind the search for DNA's shape into solely men-vs.-women terms. Franklin's perfectionism, methodical approach and difficulty in working with others is clear. But so is the relegation of a brilliant, educated woman to the back burner in 1950s academia and science. Forget about not getting her name on the eventual Nobel Prize, she couldn't even enter the men's-only dining room at the English university where she worked.

The gender gap is most evident, however, in the way Franklin is talked about by the play's other characters, all men (Anil Margsahayam's Crick, George Ketsios' Wilkins, her problematic partner; Riley Neldam and Josh Odsess-Rubin as doctoral students, and Giovanni Adams' Watson. Adams happens to be black, which may be colorblind casting, but could also be a not-so-subtle jab at the still-living Watson's comments on race and intelligence). Franklin seems, at least within Kimberly Senior's directorial vision and Helen Sadler's riveting portrayal, a fully formed, self-reliant woman about 20 years before her time, one whose passion is her work, she has no time, patience or interest in being the "kind" of woman men expect. But they can't stop talking about her appearance, seemingly cold exterior and stubbornness. While Franklin isn't concerned with defining herself as anything but a scientist, the men constantly try to define her as a woman.

That may be historically accurate, even in a play the writer admits is based on real people and events but is a work of fiction. But the men feel underwritten compared to Franklin (even though the acting is first-rate, particularly Ketsios' aching Wilkins). And at times, that works against the play's most compelling aspect: the frantic race between rival scientific teams to be the first to uncover the secret of DNA. It's not clear just *why* that's so important, but that's okay; the stakes are so heightened in the dialogue and action that we just get it. That is one of the main strengths of Ziegler's play; it's one of those rare pieces about science and scientists that doesn't try to make the brainy stuff easily digestible. It engages with the science on its own terms, allowing those already familiar the opportunity to judge whether it's "scientific" enough, but leaving the rest of us free to focus on the story's urgency.

JORDAN KUBAT/SCR

And that story, while smart and entertaining, comes with a heaping side of heartbreak and loss. It's not just the sad fact that Franklin's invaluable contributions to unraveling the mystery of DNA's structure went largely unnoticed, but that while these brilliant scientists are locked in a fierce, if collegial, battle to discover the shape of the very essence of life in hopes of further understanding it, they all struggle to understand one another. They are on the verge of a monumental breakthrough that will help the world know how humans work on the cellular level, but they haven't a clue as to how humans work on the human level.

That's what saves Ziegler's play from being completely hamstrung by the men's incessant musings about Franklin's gender and sexuality. Sure, it gets repetitive, but it also underscores an important line delivered in the opening moments: how with their high-tech instruments, scientists could now see everything, right down to the cellular level—everything, that is, except sometimes what was right in front of them.

There is another line toward the end of the play, however, that most captures Ziegler's non-empirical concerns: not the organized science of how humans work, but the messy, disorderly ways we don't. A character remarks that Watson and Crick drew a conclusion about the DNA molecule based on Franklin's images (including the titular one) that she was a bit slow to pick up on: that it consisted of two strands running in opposite directions, a pair of endless spirals that work together, but never meet.

That may be the most scientific explanation of one of humanity's most philosophical dilemmas, one that flows through *Photograph 51*: loneliness. Even though we need other people to love and feel and be with, ultimately, we all check out alone.

And the day science figures a way out of that one, maybe even the anti-vaxxers and climate-change deniers will applaud.

***PHOTOGRAPH 51***

**at South Coast Repertory, 555 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. Thurs.-Fri., March 21-22, 7:45 p.m., Sat., 2 & 7:45 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. $23-$86**

## ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

### March 22-28

**#HIKINGMYFEELINGS: HEALING YOUR MIND AND BODY ON THE TRAIL.** Sydney Williams discusses the physical and mental benefits of the activity based on her personal experiences. Fri., 7 p.m. Free, but RSVP required. REI Tustin, 2962 El Camino Real, Tustin. (714) 505-0205. hikingmyfeelings.com.

***AVENUE Q*:** The Tony Award-winning musical features foul-mouthed, mature puppets teaching a series of irreverent life lessons. Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. Through April 21. $15-$25. Costa Mesa Playhouse, 661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa. (949) 650-5769, costamesaplayhouse.com.

**TIDYING TIPS WITH KONMARI EXPERT.** Join this special brunch event with gold-certified KonMari consultant Tricia Fidler. Sat., 11 a.m. Free, but RSVP required. Room & Board at SOCO + The OC Mix, 3309 Hyland Ave., Costa Mesa. www.roomandboard.com.

***SLEEPING BEAUTY*:** Festival Ballet Theatre presents an enchanting version of the classic fairy tale featuring other storybook characters, including Puss in Boots and Little Red Riding Hood. Sat., 7 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m. $42-$56. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine. (949) 854-4646; www.thebarclay.org.

**TAROT FEST:** A full afternoon exploring the history and practice of tarot, with discussions, readings and holistic vendors. Sun., 1 p.m. Free. Makara Center for the Arts, 811 Main St., Santa Ana. (714) 465-1160, www.makaracenterarts.org.

**"AMERICAN":** A group show in which artists explore the collective identity and how it has changed because of divided political attitudes and current events. Open Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m., or by appointment. Through April 6. Free. Golden West College Art Gallery, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach. (714) 895-8316, www.goldenwestcollege.edu/art-gallery/.

**SPRING BREAK STRAWBERRY TOURS.** Guests can collect their own strawberries from the fields while learning about farming methods and Tanaka's history. Open daily, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. No reservations necessary, but check website for departure times. Through April 19. $4 (tours), $18-$20; children 2 and younger, free. Tanaka Farms, 5380 3/4 University Dr., Irvine. (949) 653-2100; www.tanakafarms.com.

**"VALENTINA JAGER: THE FACE, THE MOUTH, THE BACK":** This site-specific installation references the danger in Mexico caused by drug cartels and brings to mind the public's desensitization to violence in media. Open Thurs., 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Fri.-Sun., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Orange County Museum of Art, 1661 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana. (714) 780-2130; www.ocmaexpand.org.

# East Side Love

Chicano Classic *Boulevard Nights* cruises to its 40th anniversary

BY FRANK JOHN TRISTAN

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

It's Christmas 2017, and my dad's eyes explode as he unwraps a gift from my brother: a DVD of the 1979 film *Boulevard Nights*, a film he's talked about for years. My father raised us on reflections of our culture via all the Chicano classics (*American Me*, *Blood In Blood Out*, *La Bamba*, etc.), but according to him, this one would eclipse all of the movies that came after it; to him, this is the triple OG of Mexican-American film.

The story follows two brothers in East LA. Raymond, a twentysomething auto-shop worker by day and lowrider by night, and Chuco, a teenage high-school dropout deep in the gang life as a member of Varrio Grande Vista (VGV). Raymond used to be VGV, but he knew when to walk away, so conflict begins when he notices his brother isn't going to do the same. It's almost two separate movies: one showing the life of a working-class Chicano trying to move up in the world while maintaining his identity, the other showing a *cholo* searching for validation through gangbanging while struggling with family expectations.

The level of drama in this film is *novela*-worthy; the powerful performances of the actors make you feel every bit of the story's tragedy. Thanks to the vibrant cinematography, the colors shine across every inch of the screen. Scenes of cruising lowriders light up as if you're walking through Main Street in Disneyland, yet the reliance on purely the dim street lights for darker scenes makes an empty boulevard as vivid as one in your hometown.

Even the film's soundtrack carries the spirit of the streets at the time, from "Street Tattoo" by George Benson, which was written for the film, to classics such as "Tonite, Tonite" by the Mello-Kings, "You Beat Me to the Punch" by Mary Wells and "Duke of Earl," as performed by Gene Chandler. The music here honored the oldies that continue to define Chicanos in East LA.

"The movie came out in the late '70s, so the sound was a little more on the disco tip or what we call '*cholo* disco.' [For] cats who were into that kind of music in lowriding culture, that movie is iconic to the fullest," says Ivan "Debo" Marquez, creator of OC-based DJ crew Funk Freaks. They often pay homage to the film, even incorporating screenshots in a few of their T-shirt designs. "We find it hilarious these days, but it was kind of a blueprint of our lives."

Even though the movie partially focuses on *cholos*, it's the first drama to present them from an insider's view and in a non-exploitative way. *Boulevard Nights* started in 1977 as a script written by the then-22-year-old Japanese-American Desmond Nakano for a film class at UCLA. Paul Schrader had assigned his students to find an article in the newspaper they thought would make a good movie.

Nakano had picked a *Los Angeles Times* article about car clubs and gangs in East LA. After class, Schrader told Nakano the article could be a real film. With just 10 weeks to complete the script, Nakano went to Whittier Boulevard every weekend to hang out all night, managing to blend in as a young person of color so he could get a real sense of what was going on and absorb as much of the vibrant street culture into his story. People were actually very open with him about everything, allowing him to capture both the lowrider scene and the street gangs.

"Whittier Boulevard at the time was like one big party," Nakano says. "On one level, I was interested in the car clubs and the gangs. As a writer, I was really interested in the reality of the people and the culture, what the culture was and what the culture had to deal with because it's a subculture."

Just as Nakano finished his script, he met producer Bill Benenson, who took it to executive producer Tony Bill. They financed the film via bank loans, and later made a deal with Warner Bros. in which the studio agreed to purchase the finished product for a fixed amount. They brought in a young team for the production: director Michael Pressman, cinematographer John Bailey and editor Richard Halsey. The budget was $2.5 million, and since it was produced independently, the creators were given a large amount of freedom. "We were striving to make a real serious look at a culture," Pressman says. "That drove us, and that's why I feel [it] has survived the test of time.

"We wanted to capture a realism, but at the same time a heightened realism," Pressman adds. "It had an insightful lens, meaning we knew we wanted to capture the culture and not make it a documentary … [to] make it a realistic drama, but give it some magical enhancement."

Production offices were set up right on Whittier Boulevard, so the team could embed themselves in the local community. They worked with groups in East LA such as Ayudate Community Center and Nosotros to build a mostly Latino crew. The cast was almost all unknown Latino actors, including extras, the stars included Richard Yniguez (Raymond), Danny De La Paz (Chuco), Marta DuBois (Shady), Betty Carvalho (Carmen Avila) and Gary Carlos Cervantes (Big Happy). The film was shot on location in the barrios of East LA and on Whittier Boulevard, working with local car clubs such as Imperials to beautifully re-create a cruise night with hundreds of cars rolling down the boulevard. "We became a part of the community, so in essence, we weren't outsiders," Pressman says.

"What I respect about the makers of *Boulevard Nights* [is] they went into East LA and asked the culture, 'Tell us how to make this movie right; show us how to make this authentic,'" De La Paz says.

The movie was released 40 years ago this Saturday, and the story of its making is worthy of a documentary. Added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry in 2017, its popularity continues, as evidenced by the YouTube videos and social media pages dedicated to it. De La Paz even recently posted to Instagram a photo of himself beside a child with "VGV" written on his palm. The actor is the only cast member who makes regular public appearances to meet with fans.

"I think that touches somebody when something's real," he says. "I think that's why *Boulevard Nights* has lasted all these years. … When people watch it, they feel it, and when people can feel a movie, it separates that movie from the pack."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

ANTHONY CARAENO

# Heaven On Wheels

## New Red Bull Music documentary is a loud love letter to the LA skate scene

BY JOSH CHESLER

Among the most iconic communities in Southern California are skateboarding and the music scene that goes with it. For the past six decades, skating has been closely tied to LA, supporting tight-knit scenes for everything from hardcore to punk rock to trap music.

That's why Red Bull Music asked director Van Alpert to make a documentary about the two. Although it didn't pan out as planned, LA *Skate + Music* brings a new depth to the everlasting connection, encapsulating the symbiotic relationship between skate culture and music.

"Originally, Red Bull Music had asked me to make a film about the different neighborhoods in LA and how the different people are affected by skateboarding and music," Alpert says. "Like most documentary films, we set off with one goal and came back with something else. We learned that most of these skaters that we were working with had lived in almost every part of the city—and now they all respectively live in the neighborhood they want to live in right now—so we ended up making a film about owning individuality and being yourself."

In just 14 minutes, Alpert shines a light on how music and skateboarding come together for everyone from Illegal Civilization's Mikey Alfred to skateboarder/influencer/musical tastemaker Hesh in a way that's both approachable and understandable for those who would never watch a normal skateboard documentary and thorough enough for the scenes' diehard fans. But by the time the stylish director had finished the filming process, his biggest takeaway was no longer something that could be picked up on video.

"When you're going to meet people and make a documentary about them, they're letting you into their homes and their lives," Alpert says. "They're letting you ask them questions about their family and friends and childhood, and it becomes a very personal piece. I've ended up becoming friends with these guys while working on this project, and that aspect of it became way bigger than the film itself."

For an artist such as Anaiah Lei, the drummer of the LA garage rock band the Bots, there was never a chance he wouldn't want to be involved once he learned about LA *Skate + Music*. "I'm from LA, and music and skateboarding are literally the two things that mean the most to me, so I knew I wanted to be a part of it before I even knew who else was going to be in it," Lei says. "It came out awesome, and I think they featured a lot of people who aren't super-well-known but are all from LA and a part of that culture. LA sometimes gets a bad rap, but there are a lot of great people here, and this documentary showcases some of the realness going on in LA."

For Lei, part of the excitement over LA *Skate + Music* is about further exploring how the connection between two seemingly unrelated art forms has spent more than a half-century feeding off each other, as well as how Los Angeles may be the only breeding ground where such a symbiotic relationship could take place.

"LA just breeds these amazingly talented people for both music and skateboarding," Lei says. "There's been great music coming out of LA since the beginning of time, and this is where skateboarding started. They've always gone hand-in-hand here, and they're just two things that will always go together."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

*To view the documentary, visit www.redbull.com/int-en/tv/video/AP-1YJDDFX3H2111/la-skate-music*


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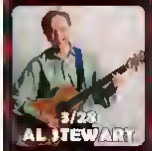


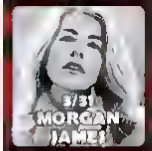

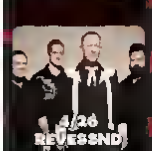


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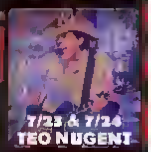
| 3/21 | ULI JON ROTH: 40th Anniversary Celebration Of Electric Sun And Tokyo Tapes |
| 3/22 | SUPER DIAMOND |
| 3/23 | THE RLASTERS |
| 3/24 | MARK FARNER'S AMERICAN BAND |
| 3/27 | RRAND X |
| 3/2E | AL STEWART |
| 3/29 | ARBAFAB |
| 3/30 | BEATLES VS STONES |
| 3/31 | MORGAN JAMES |
| 4/5 | THE ARCHIES starring Ron Dante |
| 4/6 | Music of Heart & Fleetwood Mac w/ OOG N BUTTERFLY & MIRAGE |
| 4/7 | STEPHEN BISHOP |
| 4/8 | BUDDY GUY |
| 4/12 | COMMON SENSE |
| 4/13 | MADDOGS AND THE ENGLISHMAN (Joe Cocker Tribute) |
| 4/14 | ALBERT LEE |
| 4/19 | An Evening with THE MUSICAL RDX |
| 4/20 | LOS LOROS |
| 4/2S | RITA WILSON |
| 4/26 | REVEREND HORTON HEAT |
| 4/27 | AMBROSIA |
| 4/2E | KEIKO MATSUI |
| 5/3 | VONICS |
| 5/4 | BERLIN |
| 5/5 | Aretha: Queen of Soul Ft: CHARITY LOCKHART |
| 5/9 | ROGER CLYNE & THE PEACEMAKERS |
| 5/10 | RAUL MALO |
| 5/11 | Songs & Stories: An Evening with ART ALEXAKIS of EVERCLEAR, Chris Collingwood of Fountains of Wayne, Max Collins of Eve 6, John Wozniak of Marcy Playground |
| 5/12 | PROJECT PRESLEY (Elvis Presley Tribute) |
| 5/1E | FOREVER ROD (Rod Stewart Tribute) |



UPCOMING SHOWS

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|---|---|---|---|
| 5/17 | An Evening with COWBOY JUNKIES | 6/22 | Y&T |
| 5/18 | THE 5TH DIMENSION | 6/23 | An Evening with JOHN HIATT |
| 5/22 | WILLIE K | 6/28 | CREED BRATTON |
| 5/23 | PUDDLES PITY PARTY | 7/13 | LOS LONELY BOYS |
| 5/24 | OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS | 7/23 | TED NUGENT |
| | | 7/24 | TED NUGENT |
| 5/26 | BLIND MELON | 7/28 | STRUNZ and FARAH |
| 5/30 | LITTLE RIVER BAND | 9/29 | SAVOY BROWN |
| 5/31 | YOUNG DUBLINERS | 9/12 | ADRIAN BELEW |
| 6/1 | DESPERADO | 9/20 | NERMAN'S NERMITS |
| 6/2 | SERPENTINE FIRE (Earth Wind and Fire Tribute) | 9/21 | HERMAN'S NERMITS |
| | | 9/22 | GARY PUCKETT |
| 6/7 | ASIA ft. JOHN PAYNE | 9/27 | QUEEN NATION |
| 6/14 | GARY HOEY | 9/28 | QUEEN NATION |
| 6/15 | DSB | 10/13 | JUDY COLLINS |
| 6/16 | SES GESE GOLD | 10/24 | TAS SENOIT |

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# concert guide»

INNOVATIVE LEISURE

## Friday

**ANYTHING FOR SELENA!: A SELENA TRIBUTE PARTY, WITH THE CDMD, LA FLOR BAND** 7 p.m., $17.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

**THE BUTTERTONES, BUDY DE ANDA** 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

**JAMESON BURT, DEAD POET SOCIETY, RYAN LEE MEAD** 7 p.m., $7, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

**LAURA JANE GRACE AND THE DEVOURING MOTHERS, MERCY UNION, CONTROL TOP** 9 p.m., $25, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaac.com

**PUNK ROCK KARAOKE** 8 p.m., $10, all ages. Gardea Amp (The Locker Room), 12762 Main St., Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544, gardeanmp.com.

## Saturday

**LED ZEPAGAIN** 8 p.m., $22, all ages. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

**LOW HUM, BEGINNERS, WYO** 8 p.m., $6, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com

**MONSTERS OF METAL FEST** 9:30 p.m., $10-$15, all ages. Gardea Amp (The Locker Room), 12762 Main St., Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544, gardenamp.com.

**THE BED LESLIES, THE TRACKS** 9 p.m., $10, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana. (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaac.com

**TOTALLY '80S LIVE** 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

## Sunday

**SEA RITUAL, THE KID CHOCOLATE BAND, STRAND** 8 p.m., $5, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

**STATE CHAMPS** 8 p.m., $20, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

**THREE CHORD BINGO, BLIND HOUSE, COYOTES DEL BARRIO, LEGENDARY SWAGGER** 2 p.m., free, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

## Monday

**DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS, GINGER ROOT** 8 p.m., $25, $65, 21+. Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana. (714) 880-7924, www.lasantaac.com

**LUCY SPRAGGAN** 7 p.m., $13, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

**MOON GRASS MOUNTAIN, LANITARIANS; RORY JUSTICE, GLITTERBUG** 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

## Tuesday

**BROODS** 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

**GREEN LEAF RUSTLERS (FEATURING CHRIS ROBINSON)** 9 p.m., $35, 21+. La Santa, 220 E. Third St., Santa Ana, (657) 231-6005, www.lasantaac.com.

**J BOOG** 8 p.m., $38, all ages. City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

## Wednesday

**ALL THAT REMAINS, ATTILA, ESCAPE THE FATE, SLEEP SIGNALS** 8:30 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

**REYND** 7 p.m., $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

## Thursday, March 28

**BLACK MOTH SUPER RAINBOW** 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

**LATE NIGHT UNION, CLASSLESS ACT, THE SHININGS** 8 p.m., $5, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

**MAREN MORRIS** 7 p.m., $40, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim. (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

**SPIRIT MOTHER, NEW CANDY, CENTRE XO** 8 p.m., $5, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

# Crazy Switch Asians

**I'm a straight, white woman in my early 30s. In theory, I've always been into men of all races—but in practice, most of my exes are Latino and white. In September, I met this really handsome Chinese American guy, and I feel like he rewired me. I've been exclusively attracted to Asian guys since. I'm not writing to ask if this is racist because I'm not asking these guys to, like, speak Korean to me in bed or do any role-playing stuff. We just date and have sex, same as my past relationships. But if any of these dudes saw my Tinder matches, they'd be like, "This woman has a thing for Asian guys." Which I do, but it's pretty new. Is this normal? Do people just change preferences like that? Also, can you do a PSA about Asian dicks? In my recent but considerable experience, they run the gamut from average to gigantic. If small Asian dicks were a thing, I would have encountered at least one by now. That's a bit of a myth.**

***Asian Male/White Female***

Here's my general take on race-specific sexual preferences: So long as you can see *and* treat your sex partners as individuals and not just as objects—we are all also objects—and so long as you can express your preferences without coming across and/or being a racist shitbag, and so long as you've interrogated your preferences to make sure they're actually yours and not a mindless desire for what you've been told you're supposed to want (i.e., the currently prevailing beauty standard or its equally mindless rejection, the "transgressive" fetishization of the "other"), then it's okay to seek out sex and/or romantic partners of a particular race.

I ran my general take on race-specific sexual preferences past Joel Kim Booster—a writer and comedian whose work often touches on race and desire—and he approved. (Whew.) I also shared your letter with him, AMWF, and Booster had some thoughts for you.

"It doesn't sound like her newfound preference for Asian men has anything to do with the uncomfortable fetishization of culture," said Booster. "It's good that she's not asking them to speak Korean or do any sort of Asian role-playing—something that's been asked of me before (and it's a bummer, trust). Her interest in Asian men seems to be mostly an aesthetic thing, which you certainly can't fault her for. There are a lot of hot Asian dudes out there."

Booster also had some questions for you.

"It's not uncommon for people later in life to discover that they're attracted to something they'd never considered sexy before—full-grown adults are out here discovering they're bi every damn day," said Booster. "But she went 30 years before she saw one Asian man she was attracted to? And now this guy has 'rewired' her to be attracted *only* to Asian men?"

He said that he would like to see a picture of this magical guy, AMWF, and I would, too.

"If she was chill about it and just started adding Asian men into the mix, this wouldn't seem like an issue," added Booster. "But from what I can gather, she has shifted to exclusively fucking Asian guys and feels the need to write a letter about it. That feels like a red flag, and yet I can't pinpoint why."

Maybe you're just making up for lost time—maybe you're getting with all the Asian dick you can now to make up for all the Asian dick you missed out on before you ran into that one impossibly hot Asian guy—and your desires/preferences/Tinder profile will achieve a racially harmonious equilibrium at a certain point. But whether you remain exclusively attracted to Asian guys for the rest of your life or not, AMWF, make sure you don't treat Asian guys like you're doing them a favor by sitting on their gamut-running dicks.

"I'm weary of people wish a specific racial preference for Asian men. And it's less out of a fear of being fetishized—though that's certainly part of it—and more because of the implicit power imbalance that exists in those relationships," said Booster. "It's all artificially constructed by the Culture of course, but I'm acutely aware that society views Asian men as less masculine and therefore less desirable. And I've learned that guys who have a preference for Asian men sometimes bring a certain kind of 'entitlement' to our interactions, i.e., 'You should feel lucky I'm paying you this kind of attention.' And that's gross! It doesn't sound like she's doing that, but something about this letter makes me feel like she wants to be congratulated for being woke enough to consider Asian guys. She'd do well to keep this stuff behind the curtain—no one wants to feel like someone was into them only because of some witch's curse a hot Chinese American guy put on them at a bar."

Follow Joel on Twitter @ihatejoelkim, and visit his website ihatejoelkim.com.

**I'm a gay. I've been with my wife since 2006. She's my sexy Asian babe. (Yeah, I'm that white guy who married an Asian woman—I'm a stereotype, but she isn't.) In the bedroom, it's great. I'm still really in love with her two kids later, and she's as sexy as ever. But she doesn't like to give blowjobs—always has been this way. When we were dating, she'd say I could go get blowjobs from someone else, but I always took it as a joke. At 35, I'm hornier than I was at 25. And my sexual tastes have changed over the years—or they've expanded, maybe. Since I now want to see what it's like to get head from a guy. How do I convince my wife to agree to this? She's afraid I might like it; I obviously hope I do. There's nothing I want more than to get head on the way home, and then be able to tell her about it and fuck her later that night. How can I convince her to let me do this while also being able to tell her about it and be truthful?**

***Horny Married Man***

I'm not lumping your question together with AMWF's in order to create some sort of hot-for-Asians-themed column. No, I'm including your letter—which arrived the same day—because it illustrates a point Booster made in his response to AMWF: "Full-grown adults are out here discovering they're bi every damn day," as he said, and you're apparently one of them.

I can only assume that by "she's afraid I might like it," you mean you've already asked the wife and she said no. You can ask again—maybe she'll change her mind—but if the answer is still no, HMM...then the answer is still no. Maybe if this were a sexual adventure you could go on together it might be more appealing to the wife. And it is because just as there are dudes out there who love blowing straight married men, there are dudes who are up for blowing straight married men in front of their wives. So if you haven't already proposed doing this in the context of a hot sexual encounter with a bi guy who'd also be into your wife...maybe you should.

As for your label, there are straight guys out there who can close their eyes and think about women while dudes blow them, i.e., straight guys capable of making the mouth-is-a-mouth leap. But you're turned on not just by the idea of getting an enthusiastic blowjob, you're specifically into the idea of getting one from a dude. That does make you bi. HMM...but for marketing purposes? Yeah, you're going to want to go with straight.

*On the* Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com): Musical-theater nerds, rejoice—it's Andrew Rannells! Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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## Toke of the Week

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

### Sherbinskis

There are a lot of ways to reach cult status within the cannabis industry, but the most straightforward approach has to be letting your product speak for itself. Mr Sherbinski, along with his selection of premium flowers and concentrates, has been skipping the small talk for loud results.

Rooted in San Francisco and coveted by some of today's pickiest smokers, Sherbinskis holds its own in a sea of copycats. Artists such as Migos, Ty Dolla $ign and John Mayer consider the Sherbinskis to be the ultimate buds when the clock reads 20 minutes after 4—and we couldn't agree more. To the company that gave the world the original Gelato phenotype and continues to push boundaries with the alchemy of plant genetics, all we can say is "Wow!"

If it takes more than a couple of fancy names in hip hop to convince you of Mr Sherbinski's rightful place at the top of the cannabis food chain, then you're in luck. The hype train has pulled into Orange County, and it's only making one stop: Blüm in Santa Ana. It's one of our go-to spots when we need to light a jazz cigarette, and with the addition of these sought-after nugs, that's even truer.

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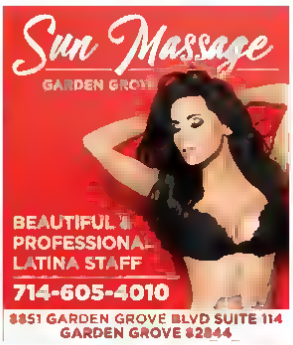
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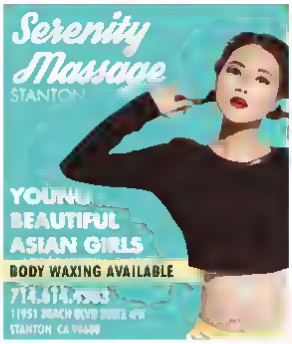
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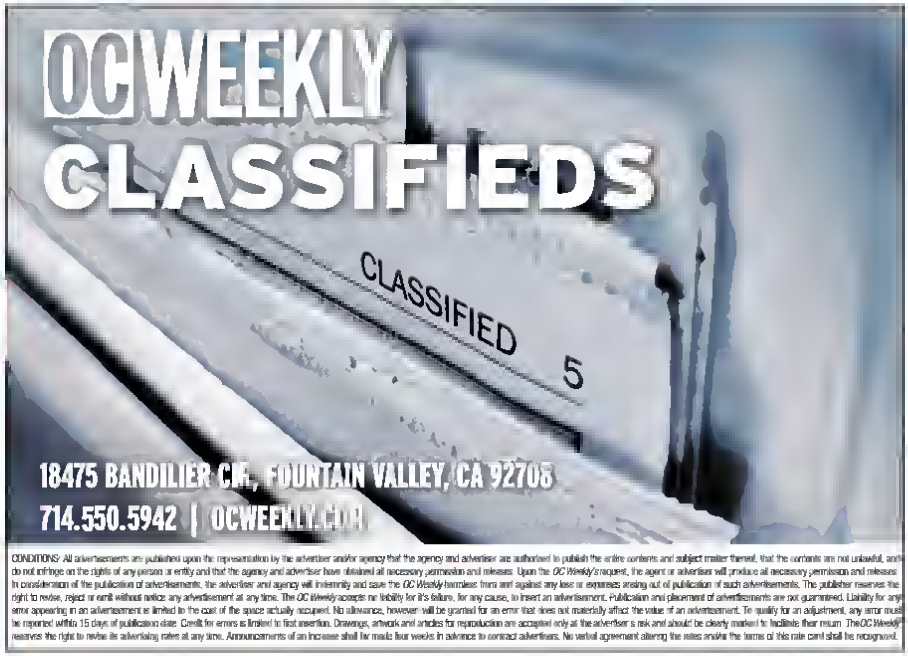



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# O, Death

Rock in peace, Dick Dale and Greg Topper

BY JIM WASHBURN

DALE: NOW SHREDDING IN THE SKY

OC WEEKLY FILE PHOTO

Death has certainly been going through his Rolodex of late. (You thought a guy who carries a scythe would be on LinkedIn?) The most recent to be made late were two giants of the OC music scene, Dick Dale and Greg Topper.

Dale was the world-renowned one, the self-proclaimed yet undisputed King of the Surf Guitar. He originated the propulsive style—based, he said, on Gene Krupa's drumming and the Middle Eastern oud music he heard in his Lebanese-American household—and he didn't just play his gold metal-flake Strat; it was more like Thor striking his mystic hammer, bringing lightning, deluges and shrieking Valkyries down upon his audiences.

I first likened Dale to Thor in a review I wrote for the *Los Angeles Times* in 1991, back when Chris Hemsworth was 8 years old. That was three decades after Dale became a Southern California sensation in 1961 at the Balboa Peninsula's Rendezvous Ballroom, where he played tremendously loud music with an elemental force to packed crowds of surfers and gremmies.

I enthused in the '91 review, "As Jimi Hendrix would do a couple of years later, Dale painted with sound, going beyond musical logic with expressionistic splashes of screaming reverb and rumbling, surging bass lines to create palpable seascapes that touched on the full majesty of nature."

Dale's career never took off the way it should have. It was other surf bands in his wake that had the big national hits (notably Santa Ana's Chantays with "Pipeline" and the Surfaris' "Wipe Out"). He didn't want to tour, so he remained a local sensation, until surf music became instantly uncool when the Beatles hit in 1964.

Dale soldiered on, running a nightclub and switching to lounge-y "Let's go to rock & roll heaven!" shows. (The urging of '80s band members Steve Soest and Richard Smith finally convinced Dale to become his old thunder-lizard self again.) Offstage, he continued to live larger than life, in half of the old Gillette mansion on the peninsula, with a tiger and other toothy critters. A divorce left him living in an RV for a while, one with painted murals of him on the sides.

He eventually wound up in a house in the desert. Dale invited Jonathan Richman and me to stay out there once. He showed us how he'd taught his dog to surf in the pool. A discussion about martial arts led to us moving furniture so Dale and Richman could spar for hours.

He told us about a movie he wanted to make, in which a kid tells a superstar guitar player that he'll never be king "because Dick Dale still lives." The enraged superstar decides to stage a concert with Dale to honor him, but the real intent would be to destroy him in a guitar battle. First, he has to find the elusive legend. Tracking a rumor that Dale is in the Himalayas, the superstar is climbing when thunder and a chorus of terrifying animal shrieks rolls down from the peaks, frightening off his entourage. The superstar reaches the summit alone, to see a generator powering a Fender Showman amp and reverb unit, connected to a Stratocaster played by a figure in a weathered serape. On opposing peaks, bears and wolves are gathered, howling along with Dale's guitar. The superstar immediately recognizes Dale's primacy and wisdom and convinces him to return to the civilization that needs him.

This is how Dale saw himself, an extension of him always referring to himself in the third person. Maybe that and the wild fibs he told—claiming he taught Hendrix how to play, or helped Leo Fender design the Strat and Telecaster—were the unpainly result of him knowing the importance of his art, while the world at large had relegated him to being a footnote.

That changed when Quentin Tarantino chose Dale's "Miserlou" to set the tone for *Pulp Fiction* in 1994. Dale was playing at his peak then, in a "power trio" format, and he finally attracted some of the international acclaim he deserved.

Dale died on March 16, at age 81, after a long battle with rectal cancer and other health issues. That's the official story. I prefer to think the King of the Surf Guitar has snuck off to the Himalayas.

Dale was preceded in death by four days by another king, Greg Topper, OC's King of Rock & Roll. His heart failed him on March 12.

Topper didn't originate any style of music. He hardly ever wrote a song. What he did do was sing and play the lascivious hell out of old rock songs, especially ones waxed by piano players such as Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Fats Domino.

"There was no one alive who could play rock & roll piano with the feeling and fire Topper had," his friend and oftimes guitarist Bobby Cochran said at a small wake for Topper last weekend.

British guitar legend Albert Lee (who has played with Eric Clapton, Paul McCartney, Emmylou Harris, the Everly Brothers and others) would frequently drive down from Malibu Canyon to sit in with Topper at a bar in Costa Mesa.

Reached on tour in Germany, Lee said, "Sad news indeed. I always looked forward to making it down to play with Topper. His style was quite unique, and he often left you guessing, launching into a song you hadn't thought of in years. I shall miss those gigs with him. May he rest in peace."

These shows were decades after Topper's heyday, when he'd pack hotel ballrooms several nights a week, bringing in so many hard-partying, money-dropping patrons that owners forgave him for destroying their nice grand pianos.

Topper was a dynamic showman, working his hand to exhaustion, wearing capes with his name in electric lights, getting women to sit on the piano so he could sing to their crotches.

And he'd routinely set the piano on fire, using Bacardi 151 as the accelerant. He'd also splash some on his crotch and light it, since he was singing "Great Balls of Fire." The flames usually went out on their own, but one infamous night, Topper's polyester pants lit up for real, and he was rolling on the stage in an effort to put them out. The audience thought it was part of the act.

Lest anyone doubt what the world nearly lost that night, Topper carried a photo of his considerable penis around in his wallet.

I got to know him after those glory days, when he was playing bars such as Balboa Island's Village Inn ("Where the debris meets the sea," Topper would exclaim, along with his signature "Get drunk and be somebody!")

The big gigs had dried up thanks to changing times and tougher drunk-driving laws. Topper had health problems. He had a defibrillator in a pouch in his chest, and his singing sometimes had a tentative quality, as if he were afraid of setting it off, though he still pounded the keys with feral abandon.

After being Mr. Nightlife for decades, Topper couldn't stand being alone at night. I was somehow deputized to be his Tuesday dinner company. Most of his meal came from a hip flask, and he could be utterly infuriating, affronting his liver with booze and me with conspiracy theories (Sandy Hook was a "false flag" operation, Bruce Springsteen was hiding his Jewish name) and his insistence on detouring to the Taco Bell drive-thru at 1 a.m. so he could bellow at the microphone so incoherently the server must have thought a wounded sea lion was in the passenger seat.

But beneath all that—as many will tell you—Topper was one of the most big-hearted, caring, lonely guys on Earth. I already miss him like the devil. And I have had quite enough of death for a while.

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